

# **SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE**

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## **KENT CONRAD, CHAIRMAN**

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### **SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE AGAIN REJECTS SUSPENSION OF BUDGET ENFORCEMENT MECHANISMS Conrad Calls on Senate to Defeat Measure When it Comes to Floor**

**Washington, DC** - The Senate Budget Committee today, by a 22 to 0 vote, has again rejected the suspension of budget enforcement mechanisms. As it did last November, the Budget Committee has sent a joint resolution to the Senate floor calling for the suspension of five budget enforcement tools, but doing so with an 'unfavorable' recommendation.

"I am pleased that the Budget Committee has again rejected the suspension of budget enforcement tools," said Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad, D-ND. "I urge the Senate to follow suit. These mechanisms help us to maintain fiscal responsibility. If there was ever a time when we needed these budget enforcement tools in place, it is now. We can not allow our budget picture to deteriorate any further."

The joint resolution (S.J. Res. 31) was triggered by a Congressional Budget Office (CBO) 'low growth' notification – reporting two consecutive quarters of gross domestic product (GDP) growth of less than one percent. CBO reported a GDP growth rate of 0.2 percent for the fourth quarter of 2001 and negative 1.3 percent for the third quarter of 2001. As required by the Balanced Budget Act, following such a 'low growth' report, the Budget Committee must send a joint resolution to the Senate floor calling for the suspension of budget enforcement mechanisms.

The resolution, if approved by the House and Senate and signed by the President, would suspend five budget enforcement mechanisms for the next two years. Mechanisms that would be suspended include points of order against legislation that would violate the budget resolution, exceed the discretionary spending caps, or exceed a committee's spending allocation. In addition, the resolution would suspend points of order against amendments to reconciliation bills unless they are deficit-neutral, and would suspend sequestration of discretionary and mandatory spending.

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